

DD/A Registry

77-2210

11 April 1977

DD/A Registry

File

Training 6

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Personnel

FROM : [REDACTED]
Chief, Staff Personnel Division

SUBJECT : Orientation Course for New Non-Professional Employees

REFERENCES : 1. Memo for DDA from D/TR, Subj, Discontent Among Students in the Recent "Orientation for New Employees," not dated

2. Memo for D/Pers from C/SPD, Subj, OTR's Orientation Course for New Employees, dated 15 Mar 77

STATINTL

1. As you requested after reviewing the references, I reviewed the critiques of the second running of OTR's course for new non-professional employees. Since the third running had just been completed, I decided that the complaints might be placed in better perspective if I also reviewed the critiques from the first and third classes.

2. The significant difference between the second class and the other two is that the second class was older and lower graded than the other two. The average age of the second class was 29.8, and the average grade was GS-3.8. The other two classes were 27 and 26.4 in average age and 4.6 and 4.1 in grade. The combination in the second class of being older and yet lower graded seemed to foster an attitude of frustration because they were behind their peers. Their hostility was directed at the "system" rather than at their own background.

3. This hostile approach is shown for the overall lecture rating of 5.2 (on a 1 to 7 scale) given by the second class in relation to the 6.0 given by the first class and 6.1 given by the third. Surprisingly, the ratings on the personnel lecture went up from 5.5 in the first running to 5.8 in the second, in spite of the hostility. (It went to 6.0 in the third running.)

4. Little can be done to pin down individual complaints since about half of the critiques are unsigned, and these are the ones with the greatest number of complaints.

5. On an overall basis, one gets the impression of an eager group of lower-graded employees with a strong drive to get ahead. The Agency must provide the proper atmosphere and mechanics to see that those employees with potential are facilitated and not frustrated in exercising this drive.

6. Among the steps that can be taken are:

a. Advise recruiters that there has been a subtle but significant change on policy on external training from career training to job-related training. (I have done this for the East Coast recruiters at the Conference [REDACTED] on 4 April and have asked C/RD to communicate this to the rest of the recruiters.

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b. We must get more information about career development (training, reassignment, promotion, etc.) to new employees. [REDACTED] the course supervisor, already plans to divide the next class into their career services and have the appropriate CMO's review these matters.

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c. C/CSB is already aware of the complaints from the second class and, as was seen from the improved rating in the third class, has focused in on the problems of this group. She and her staff will also go into greater detail about assignment policy during processing and EOD interviews.

d. I intend to bring this matter to the attention of the Careers Committee at its next meeting on 25 April. I believe the Committee should and can give greater leadership in this area.

7. While the second class was somewhat of an anomaly, I believe it raised several issues which require continuous corrective efforts.

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[REDACTED]

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)
Discontent Among Students in the Recent
"Orientation for New Employees"

FROM:		EXTENSION	NO.
TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)		DATE	DATE
		RECEIVED	FORWARDED
Deputy Director of Personnel Headquarters			16 March 1977
1. Associate Deputy Director for Administration Headquarters		16 MAR 1977	4
2.			
3. DDA		16 MAR 1977	
4. [Redacted]		3/21/77	
5. Chief, SPD			
6.			
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15.			

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

Harry Fitzwater called me yesterday to say that he had on his desk for signature a memo to Jack on the matter of discontent in the recent "Orientation for New Employees" course. I mentioned to Harry that you had tasked us with investigating the complaints, and I suggested to him that he give us his report so that we could first review it and see what more had to be done.

Attached you will find Harry's memo, as well as a preliminary report from [Redacted]

In view of the seriousness of the complaints, I think we have to dig much deeper; and I have already obtained Harry's authorization for [Redacted] to have full access to the critiques, the roster, and to [Redacted] who ran the program. In turn, I believe we should talk with some of the complainants so they could provide us with some specific information, such as names of people who might have misled them.

In time we will send you a full report of our investigation of the allegations.

ILLEGIB

Attachments [Redacted]

77-7197

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM : Harry E. Fitzwater
Director of Training

SUBJECT : Discontent Among Students in the Recent
"Orientation for New Employees"

REFERENCE : Item I.D. of the OTR Weekly Report
dated 4 March 1977

1. The reference reported unusual hostility and some bitterness among students in the second running of our "Orientation for New Employees" course. You will recall that this new course was developed to provide an orientation on the Agency for non-professional personnel who have either recently entered on duty or have been on board less than two years and have not had the benefit of such an orientation. Since this attitude was not evident in the first running of the course, I requested a more complete report on the nature of the discontent.
2. The source of discontent lay with a handful of students who were able to create doubts and apprehension among a larger number. The two areas of particular concern were training opportunities and the assignment and promotion of clerical personnel.
3. Three members of the class claimed they had been misled by Agency personnel recruiters with regard to the training opportunities which would be afforded them as employees of the Agency. One employee of six months was especially disaffected on the alleged grounds of having been told by a recruiter that he would have considerable training opportunities in the Agency, only to find after EOD that most of these were on the basis of their job-relatedness and, therefore, not applicable to him. This employee asserted during the course that he intended to initiate a grievance case on this question. Several other students in the class affirmed that they had not been told of the one-year waiting period before they could be enrolled in any external training program, including the Off-Campus Program, and they had not been informed that training was closely related to job requirements.

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SUBJECT: Discontent Among Students in the Recent
"Orientation for New Employees"

4. There was evidence of real concern about an apparent inconsistency in handling new clerical employees with regard to assignments. Some already have been assigned by the time they EOD, others not. Some are given options after EOD, others not. A sense of discrimination apparently loomed in the minds of a considerable number of students in this class over this particular practice. Even in instances in which new employees were given the opportunity to choose between prospective assignments, they were dissatisfied because they felt they did not know enough about the Agency and the possible assignments to make an enlightened choice.

5. Finally, there seemed to be considerable concern that personnel recruiters were projecting a more favorable promotion picture within the Agency, especially for clerical employees, than is actually the case. Added to this was the shock for quite a few that there is a minimum age required by the Agency for overseas assignment and that clerical assignments to the DDO presently are frozen. Evidently, many believed that these latter two points are not explained prior to EOD.

6. We, of course, are not in a position to determine the validity of these expressions of discontent nor can we ascertain whether this was an atypical group of employees. The concerns expressed, however, by the handful of more vocal members of the class appear to be worthy of note.

Harry E. Fitzwater

cc: Director of Personnel

15 March 1977

NOTE FOR: Director of Personnel

STATINTL FROM : [REDACTED]
Chief, Staff Personnel Division

SUBJECT : OTR's Orientation Course for New Employees

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STATINTL 1. I have discussed with [REDACTED] the comments in OTR's Weekly Report about the hostile attitude of some students in the second running of the Orientation Course for New Employees. Jeff substituted for [REDACTED] who was summoned out of town suddenly because of major surgery on her father. [REDACTED] the first back-up, had just been reassigned and I was involved in the DDA division chiefs' conference.)

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2. Jeff agrees that there was some hostility. Out of about forty students, ten were persistent questioners and half of them were hostile.

Among the complaints:

a. A woman with prior work experience outside the Agency reported to her new job. The supervisor asked her what she wanted to do, rather than assigning her tasks.

b. One employee complained that she joined the Agency to go overseas but was assigned to an office where she could not. Another did not want overseas service but was assigned to the DDO and was being pressured to accept an overseas job. (Assignments, of course, depend on requirements. We can straighten this out when the DDO freeze is lifted.)

c. Some wanted more say in their assignments; others felt they knew so little about the Agency that it was best for CSB to assign them. (We try to ascertain interests during the processing interview and then after they enter on duty and have the orientation lecture again discuss available jobs. But, we can't always mesh the person's desires with requirements.)

d. One young man claims he was told that the Agency would sponsor him for any college courses he wanted but later found out the courses had to be career related.

e. There were the usual complaints about not seeing vacancy notices, or, having seen them, being discouraged from applying.

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3. From what Jeff tells me of how he answered the questions, I think he handled himself well.

4. I perhaps precipitated some of the controversy. I attended the first running with [REDACTED] to hear her talk and to see what questions were asked. The questions were relatively bland. In discussing this with [REDACTED] the course supervisor, I suggested that the block of time for the "gripe session" come before the OP talk. This was done in the second running and obviously provoked many more questions.

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MAR 1977

SUBJECT: OTR Weekly Report

D. Second Running of Orientation for New Employees

The second running of Orientation for New Employees, 22-25 February, was reasonably successful. The course chairman felt that this running was an improvement over the initial one, that the schedule was better balanced, and that many of the speakers revised their talks to make them relate more to the students' level and needs. The student final evaluations, however, were not as high as those of the first class. Compared with the January class, this group was considerably more hostile, asked more questions, demanded more from speakers, and on the whole seemed somewhat bitter about their recruitment and initial employment in the Agency. A fuller report will follow.

Note

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